



Department of Commerce
Innovation is in our nature.

Washington New Americans Program

Per Laws of 2008, Chapter 329, Section 125(63)

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Report to the Legislature
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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The Washington New Americans Program was created by legislative proviso in 2008 (Laws of 2008, Chapter 329, Section 125(63)) to help legal permanent residents in the state become naturalized U.S. citizens. For State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2015, the Legislature appropriated \$396,000, increasing the amount of state general funds for the program by 100 percent.

Naturalization is the legal process that a foreign national can use to become a U.S. citizen. To qualify for naturalization, an applicant must have held legal, permanent U.S. residency (a green card holder) for three to five years. The first step of naturalization is submission of a federal N-400 Application for Naturalization form (N-400) to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. After the application is approved, the applicant must complete an interview, pass an English language test, and pass a civics test. The applicant is then qualified to take the oath of loyalty and become a U.S. citizen. Completing the naturalization process often takes several years.

The Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) administers the New Americans Program through a contract with OneAmerica. This report provides a summary of the program's SFY 2015 activities, performance measures, and program outcomes. OneAmerica's report on performance and outcomes is included in Appendix A.

Program Performance and Outcomes

The New Americans Program met all of the service delivery goals developed between Commerce and OneAmerica. OneAmerica subcontracted with eight partner agencies. One subcontractor focused mostly on outreach and education with a small amount of naturalization services. The remaining seven subcontractors provided naturalization services only.

Table 1: New Americans Program SFY 2015 Goals and Results

| Goal | Target | Outcome |
|---|--|--|
| Help legal permanent residents make progress toward naturalization | Assist 1,400 individuals | 2,270 individuals assisted |
| Use Citizenship Day events to assist legal permanent residents with naturalization | Hold 2 Citizenship Day events at a minimum of 8 statewide locations and 5 roving clinics at a minimum of 5 locations | 8 Citizenship Day events held at 8 locations; 5 roving attorney clinics held at 5 sites |
| Alert qualified legal permanent residents of New Americans Program | Implement the 2015-2016 media campaign | Media campaign launched statewide |
| Distribute media materials to multiple ethnic media outlets | Distribute information to 24 organizations | Materials distributed to 33 ethnic media outlets |
| Provide immigrants with the information and tools necessary to earn citizenship and participate actively in civic society | Deliver 24 hours of civics education training | Citizenship and civics curriculum were used to deliver 26 hours of education in 13 locations, serving 191 students |
| Assist qualified residents to submit applications for citizenship | Assist with the completion of 800 N-400 applications | 867 individuals assisted with the completion of N-400 applications |

Source: OneAmerica's SFY 2015 New Americans Program Annual Report

Appendix A

OneAmerica New Americans Program Year End Report FY 2014-2015

ONEAMERICA

WASHINGTON NEW AMERICANS PROGRAM

YEAR END REPORT FY 2014-2015

INTRODUCTION

OneAmerica is proud to submit this report on the successful implementation of the Washington New Americans (WNA) program in fiscal year 2015, a partnership between OneAmerica and the State of Washington. The purpose of the Washington New Americans program is to promote successful immigrant integration by ensuring that naturalization services are available to all eligible immigrants, a critical objective given our state's continued demographic changes. Between 1990 and 2013, the foreign-born population in Washington increased by 90%.¹ The state is now home to the fourth largest population of resettled refugees and more than 934,000 foreign-born residents, the 7th largest population in the country. Nearly one in five Washington residents (18.9%) speaks a language other than English at home. Successful integration of immigrant communities is key to the economic and civic health of our state, and access to citizenship, civics instruction, and financial education are crucial components of immigrant integration. Statewide, there are an estimated 180,000 legal permanent residents eligible for citizenship, who have not yet naturalized because of numerous barriers, such as prohibitive costs, access to legal and other services, lack of information, and fear of the process. Washington New Americans provides these residents with the information, legal services, and resources and education needed to successfully pursue naturalization, giving them the opportunity to become U.S. citizens and active, engaged members of our community.

Naturalization brings significant benefits, both to individual immigrants and to the economic and civic fabric of our state. It creates economic growth by raising incomes for newly naturalized citizens and supporting entrepreneurship. Not only are naturalized citizens able to register to vote and run for public office, they have access to better-paying, more stable jobs. In a 2010 national study by the Economic Policy Institute, naturalized immigrants tend to have very similar economic outcomes to native-born Americans, while non-citizen immigrants tend to have much lower incomes and higher poverty rates. In 2007, adult citizen immigrants had a median family income of \$57,823, 3.3% higher than that of native-born adult Americans and 33.2% higher than the median family income of non-citizen immigrants, \$38,600.² Citizen immigrants were more than twice as likely as non-citizens to become homeowners. When immigrants can naturalize, they can access loans and resources to grow their new businesses and create new jobs.

The cost of naturalization is a huge barrier to many eligible immigrants across the state and country. Studies have shown that the \$680 naturalization application fee, which has nearly tripled since 1995, prevents many eligible individuals from applying for citizenship.³ The population eligible to naturalize living at 150 to 250 percent of the poverty level faces marked barriers. Their household income is too high to qualify for a fee waiver, and the fees alone for a family of four at 200% of the poverty line to

¹ Migration Policy Institute, State Immigration Data Profiles.

² Shierholz, Heidi, Economic Policy Institute. "The effects of citizenship on family income and poverty," Feb 24 2010.

³ Nurturing Naturalization: Could Lowering Citizenship Fees Help?"

naturalize both parents consume roughly one and half weeks of pay.⁴ In addition to the application fee, high-quality legal assistance for naturalization is prohibitively expensive. Finally, immigration and naturalization law is complex. Applying for citizenship is risky – if USCIS denies naturalization, applicants lose their application fees. Especially with the relatively recent changes to the N-400 form, which doubled in length in 2014, it is important for applicants to access quality legal advice and services. However, many private immigration attorneys charge more than \$1,000 to assist a naturalization applicant, which is far out of reach for many legal permanent residents.

Washington New Americans addresses these barriers by assisting qualified applicants with fee waivers, pursuing additional partnerships with credit unions to provide supportive financing through microloans, and continuing to foster a strong partnership with the Washington Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA-WA), which provides pro-bono attorney services. In fiscal year 2015, fee waiver screenings and application assistance were provided at all Citizenship Days and Roving Attorney clinics. Fee waiver assistance is also offered by all subcontractors who provide in-office application assistance. For applicants who do not qualify for fee waivers, WNA provides information about microloans to help pay the application fee (in regions where they are available). This year, we developed a partnership with Lower Valley Credit Union in the Yakima Valley, who launched a citizenship loan product for eligible applicants in the Yakima Valley area, which has one of the highest densities of legal permanent residents eligible for citizenship in the state. Applicants can get a loan to pay for application fees and legal services up to \$1,500, and more importantly, the loan has no barriers to entry. This means that someone with poor credit or no credit will be approved for a citizenship loan, giving them an opportunity to build their credit as long as they pay the loan in 24 months. Lower Valley Credit Union reports a default rate lower for the citizenship loans than for other types of loans they offer. Citizenship loans are also available via Express Credit Union (in the King County Area) and Gesa Credit Union (in the Tri-Cities area).

In February 2014, USCIS released a newer version of the N-400 form, which presented a significant challenge for our program that we're still confronting. The form was expanded from 10 to 21 pages, with a number of additional questions and more detailed explanations required. The primary impact of this change has been to dramatically increase the amount of time it takes to provide application assistance to each client, both at our events and in-office through our subcontractors. We've recruited more volunteers for each event than we have in the past, which has helped, but some subcontractors have struggled to meet deliverables. A secondary impact of the new form is that USCIS has increased scrutiny in their review of certain sections of the application, often requesting additional records or written statements from the client at the interview. This means that we increasingly have to refer more clients out to private attorneys or community-based organizations who can represent them throughout the whole process, rather than completing their application at Citizenship Day for them to mail independently.

When funding was restored in FY15 after budget cuts, we were able to add two new subcontractor organizations to the WNA program to reach more immigrants in the Kitsap Peninsula and the Wenatchee area. We were also able to restore our comprehensive ethnic media campaign and increase internal staff capacity to do effective outreach. This is why our Citizenship Day client turnout is so much higher than last year. We're grateful for the State's decision to maintain funding for WNA in fiscal year 2016 and look forward to increasing the number of immigrants we can serve through the program.

⁴ Pastor, Manuel, Patrick Oakford, and Jared Sanchez, "Profiling the Eligible to Naturalize" Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration & Center for American Progress. November 2014.

OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Washington New Americans program has continued to build on its track record of success, expanding its capacity to assist more immigrants and dealing creatively with challenges. Through this program:

- A total of 4,893 unduplicated immigrants in Washington State were served through either in-person services or hotline and webform assistance.
- 2,270 immigrants received in-person services through a network of community based agencies across the state and through Citizenship Day events (including Roving Attorney clinics). Of these, 1,776 intakes were completed (meaning, clients were deemed eligible for services under Washington New Americans and citizenship screening was provided).
- 2,924 immigrants received information through the multilingual toll-free hotline*.
- 867 naturalization applications were completed.
- 317 non-citizen children of applicants will derive citizenship through their parents, who received application assistance through Washington New Americans.
- 8 Citizenship Day events were conducted over 2 days at 8 sites across the state, serving 611 immigrants (a 51% increase from Citizenship Day events in FY14).
- 5 “Roving Attorney” Clinics were conducted over 5 days at 5 sites across the state, serving 93 clients.
- An Ethnic Media Campaign in multiple languages informed Washington state residents about the benefits of citizenship, Citizenship Day events and the availability of services across the state.
- The Washington New Americans website continued to be an important tool for providing valuable information about the citizenship process. During FY15, 24,918 sessions and 35,049 page views were recorded.
- 37,822 multilingual outreach and informational materials were distributed to immigrants across the state in 11 different languages (English, Somali, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tigrinya, Amharic, Russian, Ukrainian and Tagalog).
- 1706 radio ads, 358 television ads, 33 print ads, and 17 online ads were placed in ethnic media outlets across Washington state.
- Press releases, media advisories, and WNA multilingual materials and information were distributed to 1,492 media contacts, including mainstream and ethnic media.
- Our “Citizenship Schools”, a citizenship and civics curriculum, delivered 26 hours of education to immigrants in 13 different locations, serving a total of 191 students. Each of these classes included a financial literacy component. In addition, this year another 196 students received classes that focused entirely on financial literacy (supported by private funding).
- 410 volunteers provided over 3,240 hours of valuable in-kind services, including assistance from attorneys and paralegals, interpretation, and general support.

*Includes requests for information that came in directly to staff phone lines and general OneAmerica phone line.

WHO WE SERVED

Through Citizenship Day events, roving citizenship clinics, and the work of our eight subcontractors, we served 2,270 people. The program continues to reflect the rich diversity of our state by serving a wide

variety of people from different ethnic backgrounds, language groups and geographic locations across Washington. Demographic information was gathered through client intake forms at Citizenship Days and through our subcontractors during the client intake process. A total of 1,776 intakes were completed; however, since it was not obligatory for clients to answer all questions on the form, not all intakes were filled out completely.

Our clients represented every continent in the world, with clients coming from 89 different countries and representing 46 languages. The top ten countries of origin for our clients were Mexico (37.1%), China (11.3%), Vietnam (7.5%), Ukraine (7.4%), the Philippines (4.2%), Iraq (2.9%), Russia (2.9%), Moldova (2.8%), Cambodia (1.8%), and Bhutan (1.7%). The linguistic backgrounds of our clients reflected these countries of origin, with 39.0% citing Spanish as their primary language, 12.6% Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin or unspecified dialect), 10.5% Russian, 7.1% Vietnamese, 5.4% English, 3.5% Arabic, 3.4% Tagalog, 3.3% Ukrainian, 1.6% Nepali, and 1.4% Somali.

The age and gender distribution of this year's clients was similar to previous years. 55.6% of clients were female and the remaining 44.4% were male. More than one third (39.8%) were in the 30 to 49 year age bracket. 20.1% reported that they were between the ages of 18 to 29, 24.9% were in the 50 to 64 age bracket, and the remaining 15.2% were 65 or older. The oldest client served by the program this year was 86.

Although immigrants may become eligible for citizenship within three to five years of being a legal permanent resident, many of our clients had been legal permanent residents for a longer period. Nearly half (44.3%) of our clients had been legal permanent residents for 10 years or more (24.6% for 10-19 years, 19.7% for 20 or more years). Slightly over half (55.7%) of our clients had been lawful permanent residents (LPRs) for 9 years or less. The longest time as a permanent resident that was reported by a client was 59 years.

The average household income of all clients served by the program this year was \$23,003.36, in line with the average income from fiscal year 2014. Once again, the average household size was 3. The largest household served had 12 members and an income well below 100% of the federal poverty guidelines. These income data illustrate the importance of offering fee waiver assistance in order to help lower-income applicants to access citizenship and benefit from the program. The vast majority of clients had incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (70.6% of Citizenship Day clients and 84.1% of subcontractor clients). We referred 404 eligible clients receiving public benefits for services through the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA).

SUCCESS STORIES

Here are three of the many success stories from the Washington New Americans program during fiscal year 2015:

David

Country of origin: Jamaica



David came to the U.S. from Jamaica in 1989 and settled in the Yakima area. He's worked as a contractor for several years to support his wife and children, but became unemployed recently. As he was looking for work, he realized that as a non-citizen, he wasn't eligible to apply for many federal contracting jobs he was otherwise qualified for. "Applying for citizenship was always in the back of my mind, but I didn't realize how important it was for me to finally do until I started looking for work." David attended our Citizenship Day on April 25 in Yakima, with more than 200 other attendees, and is awaiting his interview.

Fernando



Country of origin: Guatemala

Fernando attended our Citizenship Day in Pasco on October 18, 2014. Fernando has lived in the US with his family for 22 years. He has attempted to apply for his citizenship in the past, but got discouraged because attorneys' fees were so steep. He left Citizenship Day with a completed application free of charge. He passed his interview and civics test and officially became a U.S. citizen on January 7, 2015. Since then, he's remained involved in the WNA program. He brought his mother and his sister to our next event so they could apply for citizenship too. He also volunteered at a roving clinic in Sunnyside in December, helping sign clients in and direct them around the stations. "This is a great program and a

great service to the community,” Fernando says. “I’m really happy to help other people like I was helped.”

Lillian



Country of Origin: Philippines

Lillian has been a legal permanent resident since 1965, and held the record for oldest green card at October Citizenship Day. Lillian began seriously thinking about becoming a citizen in 2002, when her husband died. But she was afraid to apply because the N-400 application was very daunting, she said, and she couldn’t afford the application fee. Lillian’s granddaughter heard about Renton Citizenship Day in October and brought her to the event. At the event, attorneys helped her fill out the N400 and a fee waiver request form. “I was so amazed that everybody was so nice, especially the lawyers,” she said. “Everyone was so patient, even though I didn’t know anything about citizenship...it was great to have people in one room that could answer all my questions.” Lillian’s fee waiver application was approved, but as of June, she was still waiting for her naturalization interview. (The Seattle USCIS office is currently running on a 7-8 month wait as of this report). She is excited to get a passport and finally be able to vote. “I will have the ability to travel,” she said. “And I would like to be able to voice my opinion with regards to voting. I can finally have a say in how things are run.”

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In its seventh year, WNA has continued successful program elements while finding new and innovative ways to reach isolated populations, serving more immigrant families and increasing locally-based capacity in our community partners. WNA consists of three key components that provide the framework for the program:

- 1) Outreach and Marketing
- 2) Community Education: Citizenship Schools and Financial Literacy Curriculum
- 3) Naturalization Service Delivery

OUTREACH AND MARKETING

In order to reach eligible LPRs and ensure that potential applicants know about the benefits of citizenship, the WNA program expends significant effort in outreach and marketing. We launch a comprehensive ethnic media campaign 6-8 weeks in advance of each Citizenship Day, blanketing radio, TV, print and online media with our ads in 11 languages. We've also increased the use of community partnerships, free airtime and earned media to supplement formal advertising. We have found interactive strategies such as appearances on community radio call-in shows to be particularly effective as well bilingual, targeted ad campaigns on social media pages like Facebook. Above all, we know how important it is to get information out on the ground via nonprofit organizations, churches, and trusted public agencies like health clinics, schools and community colleges. That's why we continued to distribute materials (37,822 in total) to more than 200 organizations statewide.

The following examples illustrate the challenges and innovations in outreach for the Washington New Americans program in fiscal year 2015.

Multilingual New Americans Program Website: The WNA website continues to serve as a resource for people seeking information on naturalization and the Washington New Americans program. Information about the benefits of becoming a U.S. citizen, the naturalization process and requirements, and answers to frequently asked questions are all available in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese. In FY2015, we added three new languages to the website – Arabic, Ukrainian and Tagalog. Besides receiving information, visitors to the website can sign up to receive more information on upcoming events, email program staff with questions or sign up to become volunteers. The website also shares success stories of past clients, helping reduce fear and uncertainty around the naturalization process.

Our website shows a massive increase in traffic compared to FY14 (a 248% increase in page views, for example), which we largely attribute to restored funding for our multimedia campaign, and increased investment in social media advertising that links visitors to our page. The dramatic uptick in website traffic in the months surrounding large events suggests that the website continues to be an important source of information for our target clients.

Web Analytics Report

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Total Sessions | 24,918 |
| Total Page Views | 35,049 |

Monthly Page Views Report

| Month | Page Views |
|-------|------------|
| | |

| Month | Page Views |
|-------|------------|
| | |

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| July 2014 | 691 |
| August 2014 | 957 |
| September 2014 | 1,403 |
| October 2014 | 5,820 |
| November 2014 | 1,116 |
| December 2014 | 957 |

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| January 2015 | 1,030 |
| February 2015 | 924 |
| March 2015 | 1,585 |
| April 2015 | 15,066 |
| May 2015 | 3,364 |
| June 2015 | 2,145 |

Multilingual Toll-Free Citizenship Hotline: WNA’s multilingual toll-free Citizenship hotline continues to be a core element of the program and a critical tool for connecting community members to Citizenship information and referral. In fiscal year 2015, WNA received 2,924 requests for information about naturalization through our multilingual hotline, a 49% increase in the number of calls received in fiscal year 2014. In addition, program staff responded to 118 information requests through webform contacts via the multilingual website. Clients were encouraged to call the hotline through all of our outreach activities, and we offered to add each caller to our event list to receive information about future services including Citizenship Days and citizenship curricula. Callers were able to choose from 20 languages, including English, Spanish, Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian, Cantonese, French, Khmer (Cambodian), Korean, Laotian, Mandarin, Oromo, Punjabi, Purepecha, Russian, Somali, Tigrinya, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Vietnamese. Two additional languages, Burmese and Farsi, were added in June 2015.

The hotline is staffed by OneAmerica staff members, volunteers, WNA subcontractors, and community partners who are fluent or native speakers of the languages offered. Each hotline staff member or volunteer receives extensive training prior to answering hotline calls including shadowing an experienced hotline worker to ensure that all calls are answered with professionalism and high-quality information. We continue to utilize Halloo, a web-based telephone service, which notifies hotline staffers when a new message is received. Hotline staffers have the option of accessing their voicemail messages via the Halloo website or telephone. Hotline staffers respond to the message in the language requested and provide appropriate information to the caller, including an eligibility screening, information on Citizenship Day and referrals. If the caller meets the basic requirements for citizenship, they receive information about an upcoming Citizenship Day event or are referred to a subcontractor in their area. In cases where the caller does not qualify to apply for citizenship, staff refers the caller to an appropriate organization to seek further assistance. Callers who are not yet eligible for citizenship but would become eligible in the future are entered into a database of future contacts and given reminder calls when their eligibility date approaches.

As in previous years, we saw significant increases in hotline traffic surrounding Citizenship Day and Roving Clinic events. This was especially true immediately following our ethnic media ad purchases, which provided a straightforward way to assess the impact of our media campaign.

Text Messaging: This is the fourth year of OneAmerica’s text message campaign. When an individual texts the word ‘citizen’ to 95577, they receive the date and location of the nearest Citizenship Day event. This service is also offered in Spanish (with the code word changed to “ciudadano”). Since more

than half of our hotline callers have limited or no access to email or a computer, text messaging is an effective tool.

Ethnic Media Campaign: We focus our ethnic media campaign on our two major Citizenship Day events on October 18 and April 25 in four cities each. OneAmerica built upon the relationships established in previous years with local media to further improve our outreach to immigrant communities. In fiscal year 2015, we distributed press releases and multilingual materials to 1,492 contacts in ethnic and mainstream media.

For advertising material, we continued to use the advertisements developed in partnership with UpRoar during the program's pilot year. The advertisements featured photos of community members who had become citizens with a phrase about how citizenship was beneficial. We have also worked with ethnic media partners to record additional ads in-language (like Vietnamese, thanks to Radio Saigon, and Korean with Radio Hankook).

Earned Media:

We have continued to reach out to local, statewide and national media outlets to secure earned media coverage of the Washington New Americans program, including pre-and post- event coverage. The WNA program employs press releases, direct follow-up and media kits to ensure that appropriate news outlets are aware of the program activities. Press releases and media kits were distributed to media across the state in the lead up to Citizenship Day and Roving Clinic events. These efforts resulted in free earned media stories about the WNA program during the 2015 fiscal year including articles and television news stories in the Tri-City Herald, Columbia Basin Herald, and NBC local news in Yakima and the Tri Cities (see Appendix D for examples).

In addition to traditional earned media, we have leveraged our existing relationships with ethnic media outlets to secure interactive earned media coverage through WNA program staff and volunteers participating in popular call-in shows in Spanish and by connecting naturalized former clients with reporters to discuss the profound impact that citizenship has had on their lives. We appeared on the radio in the Tri-Cities area in advance of October Citizenship Day, and on KSVR Skagit Valley Community Radio in Mount Vernon during the weeks preceding April Citizenship Day.

Paid Media:

We bought 33 print advertisements in 8 outlets and 17 web-based advertisements in English, Chinese, Korean, Russian Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. We purchased ads in local ethnic newspapers including the La Raza del Noroeste, El Sol de Yakima, El Hispanic News, Tu Decides, Runta News, Korea Times, Northwest Asian Weekly, Phuong Dong Times, Chinese Seattle News. We were also able to obtain a great deal of free advertising through calendar announcements and free ads placed by supportive publications. Finally, we purchased targeted advertising in English and Spanish on Facebook, designed to reach Facebook users living within 50 miles of one of the Citizenship Day sites.

We focused the bulk of our efforts on radio, which is more cost-effective than print or television, and client exit surveys show that radio ads are effective. In fiscal year 2015, we bought 1,706 radio ads in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean and Russian. We worked with the following stations:

Radio

- La GranD (KDDS-FM Sea/Tac)
- La GranD (KZML-FM Wenatchee/Moses Lake)
- La GranD (KZTA-FM, KZTB-FM Yakima)
- KOMO News Radio 97.7-FM Seattle)
- KAOS Community Radio, 89.3-FM Olympia
- KMAS Newsradio 104.1-FM Mason County
- Mixx 96.1-FM KXXO Olympia/Tacoma
- Public Radio (KDNA-FM Yakima)
- Radio Hankook (1230 AM; 1450 AM Seattle)
- Radio Luz (KNTS-AM Sea/Tac/Everett)
- El Rey (KKMO-AM Sea/Tac/Everett)
- Radio La Campesina (KRCW-FM Tri Cities)
- La Zeta KMMG 96.7-FM Tri Cities
- Skagit Valley Community Radio (KSVR-FM Mt. Vernon 91.7 FM)
- La Estación de la Familia (KVAN 1560 AM, Yakima, Tri-Cities, Moses Lake, and statewide via internet)
- Russian Radio 7, Portland/Vancouver
- Star 101.5 FM, Seattle
- Portland Christian Radio, KQRR 1130 AM, Portland/Vancouver
- Radio Saigon (Seattle)
- La Nueva (KWLN-FM)

As in previous years, we concentrated on Spanish-speaking communities for our television efforts. We bought 358 advertisements on Univision in Seattle, Vancouver (Portland Media Market), Tri-Cities, and Yakima.

Television

- KUNP (Portland/Vancouver, Univision)
- KUNS (Western Washington, Univision)
- KUNW (Eastern WA, Univision)

Multilingual Flyers and Materials: Printed materials such as multilingual flyers and posters are critical to our outreach, because our flyers contain the comprehensive list of documents that clients should bring with them to Citizenship Day. If clients don't come prepared, we cannot assist them that day. This year, only 10.7% of our Citizenship Day clients reported hearing about the event through flyers or posters, but another 21.3% heard about the event via a community organization, church, or school, which we attribute to our widespread flyer distribution.

We use outreach materials in multiple formats and languages developed during the program's pilot year. WNA Staff distributed a total of 28,461 print materials over the course of the year, in 11 different languages (English, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Russian, Ukrainian, Somali, Tigrinya, Amharic and Spanish). For Citizenship Days, each flyer included key information on the event, such as the location and time, as well as information on what to bring, the cost to apply, and what to expect at the event. We also printed posters with the same information that could be displayed in public spaces.

We also distributed postcards in English, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese that featured a photo of a community member with a phrase about how citizenship was beneficial. The postcards also contain information on the services offered through WNA and the website and hotline number.

These materials were heavily distributed in the target communities through WNA subcontractors, community partner organizations, volunteers, community events, local businesses, and OneAmerica staff. Engaging new partners in the public and private sectors has been important in terms of material distribution. We successfully had three school districts this year send home materials with their ESL students. We also distributed materials to more than 60 public libraries statewide, as well as a dozen public health clinics like SeaMar. As in previous years, OneAmerica volunteers in Wenatchee, Yakima, the Skagit Valley, South King County, and Vancouver provided a great deal of assistance with outreach.

CITIZENSHIP SCHOOL CURRICULUM PRESENTATIONS

Our “Citizenship Schools”, a citizenship and civics curriculum, delivered 26 hours of education to immigrants in 13 different locations, serving a total of 191 students. Each of these classes included a financial literacy component. In addition, this year another 196 students received classes that focused entirely on financial literacy (supported by private funding).

Washington New Americans program staff and volunteers presented the 26 hours of civics instruction in partnership with a number of our subcontractors and other community partners. An average of 15 students attended each class. Presentations took place at:

- Asian Counseling and Referral Service (Seattle)
- Chinese Information and Service Center (Seattle)
- Holy Spirit Parish (Kent)
- Trinity Lutheran Church (Tacoma)
- King County Library (Redmond and Kent-two presentations)
- Tacoma Community House
- Atlantic Street Center (Seattle)
- Pierce County Library (Lakewood)
- Goodwill (Seattle)
- Jewish Family Services (Bellevue)
- La Casa Hogar (Yakima)
- CAFÉ (Wenatchee)

We taught participants who came from a wide array of ethnic backgrounds, including Thai, East African, Vietnamese, Chinese, Eastern European, Mexican, and Central and South American immigrants, among others. Most students were over the age of 40, with low levels of English language skills, but two sites (Atlantic Street Center and Goodwill) had a large number of youth ages 16 to 25. Most presentations served one or two ethnic communities or language groups. However, several presentations, including those at the Jewish Family Services and Tacoma Community House, were open to all students no matter their primary language or country of origin, and featured extremely diverse student groups with upwards of 8-10 countries of origin represented.

The curriculum is designed to assist students in preparing for the naturalization exam, but it goes beyond simple test preparation and provides students with concrete, current examples of why the historical events and facts tested in the 100-question naturalization exam are relevant. Facilitators led the programs with a discussion on local community issues, individuals' experiences with voting, and ideas of democracy.

Facilitators try to focus the class topics around local events wherever possible. For example, one class focused on the efforts of the residents of Seattle's International District as they fought to keep the Kingdome out of their neighborhood in the 1970s. Just a few weeks after the class, the students were going to Olympia with their teacher to meet with legislators, and facilitators discussed the civic impact created by community members in the 1970s, and how current students can have that same impact by keeping in contact with their representatives.

Facilitators also focused on the ways in which students can be civically engaged aside from voting, such as contacting their legislators and sharing their stories and/or opinions on issues currently facing their community. By focusing on the potential impact on students' lives and their own power to make a difference, the civics curriculum is designed to empower and motivate students to be engaged (be it civically, in their child's school, church etc.) and to give back to their communities.

In communities with low levels of English, the ability to present information in the community's language of choice greatly enhances the learning experience and potential for active, participatory learning. The internal WNA staff can teach classes in Spanish, and we work with teachers ahead of time to arrange for interpreters whenever possible. This assures that all students can be fully engaged in the lesson. This year, we offered classes in Chinese, Vietnamese and Spanish. Producing handouts in languages other than English has improved the student experience. WNA has added additional participatory activities, visual aids and additional volunteers to assist students who may be confused, increasing our ability to effectively serve legal permanent residents who struggle with English or have little exposure to formal education. These groups face the most challenges in naturalizing and are often the most in need of services.

FINANCIAL LITERACY AND INTEGRATION

In 2013, we began including financial literacy topics within our civics classes, because we found that economic integration was a critical key to successful civic participation. When we follow up with clients after Citizenship Days, we find that a small portion of them cannot mail their N400 applications because they haven't been able to save \$680 for the fee.

Over the past several years, it became clear that the application fee was a significant barrier to citizenship for many clients. While we applauded the instatement of the USCIS fee waiver in 2009, enabling some low-income applicants to naturalize for free, many people who need it don't qualify. Only people who earn less than 150% of the federal poverty line qualify; for example, a family of four that earns more than \$35,775 doesn't qualify. Saving enough to apply proves very difficult – the fees for two adults would amount to more than two weeks' wages. Low-income immigrant households are also more likely to be excluded from the traditional financial system, and may be using check-cashing, payday lending and other high-interest forms of credit to get by.

In response, we developed a financial literacy curriculum and incorporated it into our civics program in 2013. The financial literacy curriculum is designed to help immigrant communities understand the U.S.

financial system, learn how to access resources like microloans and savings tools, and connect them to more in-depth financial services when needed. We teach the basics about getting a bank account, avoiding fees, budgeting, understanding and repairing credit, avoiding scams, and working towards long-term financial goals. Funded by the AmeriCorps program, program staff and volunteers deliver workshops covering basic financial topics. In FY2015, 387 students participated in financial literacy classes led by WNA staff.

In February, we created a video seminar that we began showing at Citizenship Days and clinics that focuses on ways clients can afford the \$680 filing fee for the citizenship application. The video discusses fee waivers, special citizenship loans (including lending circles), budgeting, and also gives information on how to check the status of their citizenship applications after they leave our clinic. We show the video in the waiting room during Citizenship Days and clinics when clients are waiting to see an attorney. This is a really creative way to leverage long wait times at clinics and educate many more clients about the many options available to help them afford citizenship.

NATURALIZATION SERVICE DELIVERY

Services overview

From July 2014 through June 30, 2015, we served a total of 4,893 clients (unduplicated) through either in-person services or hotline and webform assistance. 1,776 immigrants completed an intake through our program, exceeding our goal of 1,400 clients. These clients came to us via our hotline, website, media campaign, community partners, subcontractors, and word of mouth. A total of 823 clients served by subcontractors or at Citizenship Day were receiving public assistance. Many qualified for the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) program, and so they were referred to the ORIA program. In fiscal year 2013, each person on public assistance who could be moved from state-funded programs to federally-funded programs saved the state of Washington at least \$2,250. This means that if savings remained similar in fiscal year 2015, only 167 (20.3%) of those clients would need to become citizens in order to offset the cost of state funding for the WNA program. Moreover, the average fee for citizenship assistance with an attorney is \$1,000. The WNA program saved Washington residents nearly \$2.3 million in legal fees in fiscal year 2015.

We completed a total of 867 N-400 applications, exceeding our goal of 800 N-400 applications. The clients who were not referred to ORIA and were not able to complete their N-400 after their intake were generally unable to proceed for a variety of reasons – because they were not yet eligible for citizenship, they needed additional legal representation, or they were unable to afford the application fee. At Citizenship Days, clients who did not bring sufficient information or the necessary documents to proceed were given instructions by a volunteer attorney and referral information to continue their application later.

Through N-400s completed directly at Citizenship Day or through our subcontractors, WNA also helped 317 children under 18 derive citizenship through their parents under the Childhood Citizenship Act of 2000. Children under 18 who are legal permanent residents can derive citizenship if the parent with legal and physical custody naturalizes. These children automatically derive citizenship, can immediately

file for a U.S. passport or an N-600 application, and can exercise all the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Partner Agencies

We partnered with eight subcontractor agencies, seven of which provided naturalization application services. However, because they received BIA accreditation relatively recently (November 2014), KIAC's contract focused mostly on outreach and education with a small amount of naturalization services included. All subcontractors attended a mandatory 6.5-hour training on September 4, 2014, which covered program information on important processes and a review of Citizenship Day, among other things. The training also featured two special presentations for subcontractor staff: One on advanced topics in naturalization by two experienced immigration attorneys, and one from the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP) with a question and answer session.

Subcontractors conducted pre-screening interviews to determine if a client was eligible to naturalize, assisted clients with completing the N-400 application, assisted with Citizenship Day planning, provided staff to help run Citizenship Day events, distributed multilingual WNA materials, partnered with OneAmerica to offer our civics and financial literacy education, assisted with responding to hotline calls, and collected data for the program.

Our subcontractors continued to face challenges because of funding uncertainty and budget cuts, which led to staff cuts and the implementation of sliding scale fees in many programs. Funding is a daily struggle for smaller, community-based subcontractors and has resulted in the contraction of services and the loss of staff. Even the small fees implemented by subcontractors have caused hardship for some clients who already face difficulty paying application fees. For some subcontractors, this has meant a drop in client numbers and more difficulty meeting their deliverables. Although no one is turned away because of inability to pay, the added costs still strain family resources and often result in families choosing to move forward with only one citizenship application rather than naturalizing the entire family.

Despite these challenges, our subcontractors met all deliverables. They offered in-office naturalization services to 1291 immigrants and completed 558 N-400 applications. Subcontractors served clients from 75 different countries and 46 different language backgrounds. A number of our subcontractors stressed in their final reports the importance of Washington New Americans funding in keeping their naturalization programs running: "Thanks to WNA, we have been able to maintain 3 BIA accredited staff to provide high quality legal immigration services, ensuring naturalization for more clients and reducing the risk of error and complications for immigrants with USCIS." Another noted that "The partnership with OneAmerica has greatly helped our program's sustainability."

In fiscal year 2015, the WNA program continued to expand technical support and legal capacity building for subcontractors. In light of the current debate around immigration reform and anticipated changes on a federal level, Washington New Americans and our partners are anticipating greatly increased demand for services in the next few years, and we are attempting to build internal capacity to support this demand. Opportunities for low-cost legal training and technical support will be critical if Washington's small, community-based NGOs are to respond to the surge in demand that would result from an announcement on some form of administrative relief or the passage of comprehensive immigration reform. In Fiscal Year 2016, we will be co-hosting a comprehensive naturalization training in

Seattle, in partnership with the Immigration Legal Resource Center and Asian Counseling and Referral Service, free of charge to nonprofit citizenship service providers in Washington.

SUBCONTRACTOR CLIENT STORIES

Throughout the year, our subcontractors have worked with clients from diverse backgrounds with unique challenges and triumphs. In their 2015 fiscal year reports, they shared with us many stories of such clients. Here are a few of these stories:



residency case.”

“We assisted a 46 year old Vietnamese client with his naturalization application and with his wife’s family petition. He had been a lawful permanent resident for five years. His wife did not have any legal status. In order to file a family petition for his wife he decided to become a US citizen first. We assisted him with the N-400 Application for Naturalization in October 2014. His interview was in November 2014. The client was prepared for the interview by one of our counselors, and accompanied to the interview by same counselor. The client’s case was recommended for approval at the interview, and he received his Oath Ceremony notice one month later. The entire process took 2 months from start to finish. The client was so pleased and happy with our diligent work and service that he retained our organization immediately to work on his wife’s permanent residency case.”
– *Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Vancouver*

“One America emailed me long ago about a Filipino gentleman with a severe disability who wanted to become a US citizen. The man and I emailed back and forth for over a year, discussing his disability, his concerns and his needs. Finally on a Saturday in Nov. 2014 I agreed to meet him and his family at my office, to accommodate their schedule and disability. He is severely disabled. He has a neurological condition that makes muscle movements and speaking very difficult. Due to his extreme slurring of speech it is also very difficult to understand him. His mind and cognition skills are normal, however, so he did not want to ask for a waiver of English, only an accommodation. I contacted USCIS several times regarding an accommodation. Finally USCIS assigned a senior officer who used to be a medic in the Army, and she was very patient with him. I represented the couple at the interview in mid-February and we were all thrilled when he passed the test (using an iPad to very slowly type out his responses), and was sworn in with his wife in a private ceremony with the Assistant District Director the same morning. They have a young son who derived citizenship as a result as well.”
– *Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Seattle*

“Chinh Chu and Mom Sok have a very similar immigrant story that brought them to Tacoma Community House. They both immigrated to the United States in the summer of 2009, Chinh coming in July from

Vietnam and Sok in June from Cambodia. Both of them came to TCH to study English in July of 2009. In July 2014, when they had 5 years in the United States, they enrolled into our citizenship classes. Coincidentally, they also submitted their applications for naturalization on the same day, August 27, 2014. They continued to attend citizenship classes for four quarters, each accumulating 112 hours of instruction. Chinh Chu had his interview on April 27, 2015 and has passed the interview and examination portion of the naturalization process. He is currently waiting for the Oath ceremony to be scheduled. Mom Sok had her interview on April 28, 2015 and became a citizen on the same day. Congratulations to both of them.”
– Tacoma Community House

“Mr. Leung is from Canton, China. He is in his 60s. He has been diagnosed with Poliomyelitis and been in wheelchair since he started attending our naturalization class. Even though it was hard for him to come to the agency by bus, he still attended the naturalization class without absence. Last year, his efforts paid off. Mr. Leung passed the naturalization test and now is a proud US citizen; however, he still keeps attending the ESL class at CISC. For him, passing the naturalization test is just a start of his learning journey.”

– Chinese Information and Service Center

“Gustavo knew about our services as we helped his wife apply for him to become a Lawful Permanent Resident. As his wife is a US citizen, he worked hard on his English so he could apply for citizenship at the earliest opportunity, when he had been a resident a bit short of three years. Gustavo threw himself into preparing for the exam, and when he came for his mock interview, he knew all the answers perfectly. He passed the citizenship exam with flying colors, and was invited to attend the huge July 4th oath ceremony in Seattle. Before the sunburn had even healed, he and his wife were in my office to inquire about petitioning for his parents to become Lawful Permanent Residents.”

– Catholic Community Services of Western Washington

“Balvir Kaur is a mother of three who emigrated from India five years ago. After settling down in Shoreline, they were enjoying their lives in Western Washington. The whole family, including her husband, decided that they wanted to become US citizens. We helped her and her 18-year-old daughter first. While filling out the application, we gave her instructions on how to prepare for the interview, and how to look for on-line resources. We also did a short mock interview with her so she could share what she learned with her whole family. The applications of her husband and her 20-year-old daughter were sent out one month after she got her fee waiver approval letter from USCIS. Finally, after 9 months of waiting, they all passed the interview and got their certificates. The youngest son was 17 when he became eligible to derive citizenship from his parents. We provided assistance for his N-600 application too. So the whole families’ dream came true. They are all US citizens now.”

– Asian Counseling

and Referral Service



Maria started attending our citizenship classes only to support her husband Alberto who wanted to become a citizen. Alberto was eligible for the exemption from the English Language exam but Maria wasn't. Maria's dream was for her and her husband to become citizens together, but the fact that she didn't know any English, and that they were

going through some financial hardship, made things more challenging for them. During our first weeks of citizenship class Maria just observed but eventually she started to participate more in class. Maria was making great progress but because of her work schedule she had to stop coming to class. In January 2015, Maria came back to our class, this time determined to finally become a citizen. Maria shared with us that her determination came from the fact that in her town, the city council had decided to increase their water monthly fees. When she attended a city council meeting to voice her opinion on the matter, she was told that she shouldn't be there because she was not a citizen and couldn't vote. Maria was enraged by this and decided that if she wanted to see changes in her community she needed to become a citizen. In our citizenship class she learned about the citizenship loan program which she and her husband obtained. Maria and her husband Alberto, from Granger Washington, both became citizens on July 4th during an outdoor Oath Ceremony in Yakima.

– *La Casa Hogar*

When Guadalupe started attending our citizenship classes she was very insecure and nervous. The first day of class she asked to meet in private with the citizenship instructor, because she was embarrassed to disclose the fact that she was illiterate. Guadalupe was overwhelmed when she found out that she didn't qualify for the English exemption and that part of the naturalization exam had a reading and writing component. Growing up in rural Mexico she never had the opportunity to attend school; she married at a very young age and later immigrated to the U.S. with her family. Guadalupe's priority when she arrived in the U.S. was to support and provide a better life for her children. Becoming a U.S. citizen was a dream that seemed unattainable to her. With the encouragement of the citizenship instructor, her classmates, volunteers and family Guadalupe made the decision to take on the challenge of becoming a citizen. She dedicated countless hours to learn the questions and met once a week with the citizenship instructor to practice reading and writing. She even enrolled to take some English classes at the local community college. On July 4th 2015, Guadalupe realized her dream of becoming a U.S. citizen. No longer insecure, nervous, or embarrassed, she celebrated with family and friends her many accomplishments during her transformative journey.

– *La Casa Hogar*



Citizenship Days

We conducted 8 Citizenship Day events at 8 different cities across Washington State in Renton, Moses Lake, Pasco, Olympia, Tacoma, Yakima, Mount Vernon, and Vancouver. OneAmerica worked with the Washington State Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), WNA subcontractors, and other community partners to plan and organize these events.

The Washington Chapter of AILA started holding Citizenship Days in 2005, and they were run entirely by volunteers. 10 years later, WNA still has the same mission of the original Citizenship Days – to increase

access to naturalization services for low-income immigrants or those in geographic areas with few attorneys or service providers. The objective of Citizenship Day events is to bring together volunteer attorneys, mainly recruited from AILA, and paralegals at designated sites throughout Washington State to help lawful permanent residents determine if they are eligible to apply for naturalization. If they are eligible, volunteer attorneys and paralegals then assist them with preparing their naturalization applications. Since 2008, WNA and AILA have planned Citizenship Day in partnership, and this partnership has allowed the program to remain sustainable and maintain a base of steady pro bono support. In 2015, OneAmerica joined the New Americans Campaign, a national coalition of naturalization providers with sites in California, New York, Texas, North Carolina and several other states. Currently, OneAmerica and ACRS are the site leaders for Seattle, and we plan to work together with other providers and partners to increase citizenship access in the city over the coming years.

Most nonprofit service providers do have to charge fees, and so the high quality legal advice and free services offered at Citizenship Day have become even more valuable. Citizenship Day is now one of the only free citizenship resources in Washington State. In addition, the experienced attorney volunteers recruited by AILA and the support of the Washington Defenders Association (WDA) can provide comprehensive legal screening and advice even in complex cases involving criminal records, something many community-based non-profits are unable to do. Our subcontractors frequently refer cases that are too complex for their in-office staff to address to Citizenship Day, and they report that this is one of the most important parts of the Washington New Americans Program for their agencies.

Not only are Citizenship Days efficient, but the legal services offered at these one-day workshops are literally unavailable in any other setting. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requires that any attorney who assists in the preparation of an application also enter his or her appearance as the attorney of record. The attorney would need to write a cover letter, respond to any requests for evidence, and accompany the client to the interview, which would be significantly more costly and time-consuming. However, USCIS makes a specific exception to this requirement for organized pro bono events such as Citizenship Day.

The success of our Citizenship Day events is largely due to the extensive planning, outreach, and recruitment of highly experienced volunteers. In the month and a half leading up to each Citizenship Day event, OneAmerica staff, members of the AILA Citizenship Day Committee, WNA subcontractors, and community partners hold three meetings to organize and prepare for each event. The planning team for each Citizenship Day site is made up of the event host, community-based site coordinator, AILA site coordinator, and, in some cases, members from supporting organizations. All parties involved are assigned specific duties and work together to recruit volunteers, coordinate outreach to key communities, obtain food donations for volunteers, and identify and respond to any needs particular to each site. Each planning committee also creates detailed outreach plans to ensure that eligible legal permanent residents in the area are aware of Citizenship Day. Community-based volunteers distribute flyers and give workshops to educate the community about Citizenship Day in churches, local schools and other community hubs.

Volunteers fill nearly all staffing needs for Citizenship Day. Gregg Rodgers, an AILA attorney at Garvey Schubert Barer Law in Seattle, and Emily Headings, director of the naturalization program at Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, provided trainings to all of our volunteers this year. Gregg Rodgers has overseen all trainings since the program's inception. Davis Wright Tremaine, a longtime supporter of Citizenship Days, donates use of the office space and conference calling system for the trainings.

Volunteers can attend in person, participate on the phone, or watch a video of the training online and complete follow-up. We provide volunteers with electronic copies of the training presentation, an outline of the Citizenship Day stations and duties, and other key documents in advance of the training. All three trainings for attorneys, paralegals and general volunteers cover the basic eligibility requirements to apply for citizenship, an overview of the naturalization application, and an orientation on the structure of Citizenship Day. The attorney training provides a thorough review of naturalization legal issues and possible red flag issues that clients may encounter. The paralegal training shows law students and paralegals a page-by-page review of the N400 and the I-912 Fee Waiver application, to ensure they know how to fill the form out. The final training for interpreters and general volunteers gives a comprehensive overview of all the stations for the day and the various roles volunteers need to play at each. We used to roll up the interpreter/general volunteer training into the paralegal training, but we've found that non-legal volunteers make a crucial difference in how smoothly the day runs. It merits holding a full training session, and we've found that it increases engagement and retention if they feel more equipped to take full ownership of their role.

AILA-WA members make up the vast majority of attorney volunteers. Because of increasing demand for pro bono volunteer services in recent years, recruiting volunteers for Citizenship Day events is always a challenge, and resulted in a very slight reduction in volunteer hours. Still, in the 2015 fiscal year alone, 92 attorneys provided 730 hours of pro bono legal assistance, accounting for an in-kind donation of approximately \$182,375. We also recruit volunteers to serve as paralegals and interpreters, and general volunteers take on administrative duties, such as child care, copying documents, assisting clients with basic forms, and helping clients go from one station to the next. Many of our paralegals are recruited from law schools, and the program provides valuable professional experience and training for future attorneys interested in immigration law. The 318 paralegals, interpreters, and general volunteers who volunteered at Citizenship Day provided over 2,510 hours.

After each Citizenship Day, we conduct debrief meetings with each site team. These debriefs provide us with valuable feedback on how we can continue to improve the program and the client experiences.

New Flow:

This year, WNA made a slight but significant alteration to our Citizenship Day flow, or the order in which clients proceed through various stations during a clinic. In previous years, clients would fill out the intake form, and if they didn't have any criminal issues, they would proceed straight to a paralegal volunteer to fill out the N400. Then, two different attorneys would review it. However, many clients would spend 2-3 hours filling out the 21-page form and then the attorney reviewer would figure out the client wasn't eligible. Naturalization law is very complicated, and there are several non-criminal issues that can prevent an LPR from naturalizing. For example, they may have been detained at the border years ago, or not have proof they paid child support, or taken a trip longer than 6 months outside the country. In an effort to discover these problems earlier, the new flow calls for clients to meet with a screener attorney as the first step they complete at the clinic. This screener attorney goes over a list of questions designed to get at common reasons clients could be ineligible to apply (i.e. questions related to how they received their green card, travel outside of the U.S., interaction with police, etc). Based on the answers to these questions, the attorney determines whether or not the client is eligible to move forward. If they are eligible, they meet with a paralegal to complete the N-400. After the N-400 is completed, another attorney reviews it (what we call Quality Review). If the client is deemed ineligible upon initial screening, the attorney explains why he/she cannot apply at the moment, and gives resources to assist them. Most commonly, we give out referrals to private immigration attorneys for complicated cases, or a guide to how to request records from the county court.

As with our old flow, the new system ensures that every client meets with at least two attorneys and receives the most accurate service possible. Initially, we experimented with this flow at smaller roving clinics to work out the kinks and get attorney feedback on the system. Most gave very positive reviews of the new system – we were able to refer ineligible clients out more quickly, and see more eligible clients at the clinic. In fact, we were able to complete 17% more N-400s at Citizenship Days and roving clinics this year than last year, even with 11% fewer volunteers.

Additional Staff:

In the 2015 fiscal year WNA's staff was nearly doubled, going from three members (one full staff member and two AmeriCorps members) to 4.5 members (2.5 full-time staff members and two AmeriCorps members). Having more staff gives us the ability to have at least one WNA team member at every Citizenship Day site, with additional support from other OneAmerica staff members. As WNA members are knowledgeable of every aspect of Citizenship Day, including volunteer orientation, requirements for clients, and flow of the day, it is essential that at least one WNA member is present at each site to answer questions and solve problems as they arise.

Volunteer Recognition:

In an effort to better recognize our volunteers for all of the time and talent they give to WNA, we integrated all our volunteer sign-in sheets into one master attendance tracking sheet for all volunteer positions (attorneys, paralegals, and interpreter/community members). We can now see, in one place, the attendance history for the 1,800+ volunteers who have served WNA since 2009. We have started to hold a small recognition ceremony before the volunteer orientation at each clinic, where we recognize the volunteers who have worked at least 5 clinics, at least 10 clinics, at least 15 clinics, etc. We hope that by publicly thanking them, we honor their service and also inspire other volunteers to make a similar commitment. Each year we have a volunteer recognition event, but since we're based in Seattle, it's usually only local volunteers who can attend. These smaller recognition ceremonies assure everyone is appreciated for their contributions.

Client follow-up:

Although our clients complete the N-400 application at our clinics, there is still another six to eight months of work ahead of them in order to become a naturalized U.S. citizen. In order to best assist our clients throughout this process we have made our follow-up work more comprehensive. We used to call all clients who attend our clinics at least once after the event. Now, thanks to additional staffing, we call all clients 3 months, 6 months and 1 year after the clinic. We ask them if they have mailed their application, received notice to get their fingerprints taken, had an appointment scheduled for their naturalization interview, and/or whether or not they passed their tests and naturalized. At any point in this process, we can address their questions and concerns and provide referrals to local organizations that are able to help if more in-depth assistance is needed. If we learn the client has naturalized, we ask how becoming a citizen has affected their life, their ability to find another job/ sponsor a family member to come to the U.S., etc.

Roving Clinics

During fiscal year 2015, WNA and AILA-WA continued to offer the Roving Attorney Clinics introduced in 2013. These clinics are smaller and serve groups between 20 and 30 people. They're primarily organized in low-service density areas with few resources. Since fewer volunteers are needed to plan and execute a Roving Attorney Clinic, it's possible for single firms to sponsor a Roving Attorney Clinic.

These events can be organized more quickly and more frequently than the traditional Citizenship Day. These clinics are an important tool alongside major Citizenship Day events and have allowed us to serve a greater number of areas in fiscal year 2015 with limited resources. When more than 200 people showed up at Yakima Citizenship Day in April, we ended up putting more than 100 on a waitlist. We scheduled a small clinic in nearby Sunnyside three months later, and offered appointments to those on the waitlist.

Roving Attorney Clinics feature intensive pre-event outreach to speed client turnover and require smaller numbers of attorneys – typically three or four attorneys, six to eight paralegals and a local coordinator to staff and plan the event. Appointments are pre-scheduled and we prescreen clients for basic eligibility over the phone, which increases efficiency and decreases wait times for clients. The dates are scheduled around attorney availability and encourage attorneys who have not previously volunteered through Citizenship Day to become involved in the program.

In fiscal year 2015, Roving Attorney Clinics were held in Yakima, Bellevue, Sunnyside, Bremerton, and SeaTac. These clinics served 93 clients, and 56 of these clients were able to complete N-400 applications. The smaller number of required volunteers allows WNA to increase the number of clinics, reach more remote communities (such as our first-ever clinic in Sunnyside) and tailor clinics to serve the specific needs of particular communities such as low-English proficient adults. Roving Clinics were held on:

- July 12, 2014 in Yakima
- August 2, 2014 in Bellevue
- December 6, 2014 in Sunnyside
- February 28, 2015 in Bremerton
- May 16, 2015 in SeaTac

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

OneAmerica worked with a network of community partners to achieve program goals, including faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, educational institutions, businesses, and media. Our partners included:

American Immigration Lawyers Association,
Washington State Chapter
Asian Counseling & Referral Service
Big Bend Community College
Catholic Community Services of
Western Washington
Central Lutheran Church, Yakima
Chinese Information and Service Center
Clark College
Columbia Basin College
Garvey Shubert Barer
Davis Wright Tremaine

Grupo CAFÉ
Kitsap Immigrant Assistance Center
La Casa Hogar

Lower Valley Credit Union
Lutheran Community Services Northwest
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
National Partnership for New Americans
New Americans Campaign
NW Area Immigrant Asset-Building Initiative
Renton Technical College
Skagit Valley Community College

CONCLUSION

The Washington New Americans program is proud to have exceeded its contract goals for yet another year. The program provides a crucial bridge to citizenship and other resources for immigrants in Washington State. In Fiscal Year 2015, we brought on two new subcontractor partners in underserved areas, the Kitsap Immigrant Assistance Center in Bremerton and Grupo CAFÉ in Wenatchee. We took a critical eye to our clinic flow to make events more efficient. We improved our records management, which led to increased volunteer engagement and more comprehensive post-event client followup. We ramped up our outreach this year and held the biggest Citizenship Day in program history, measured by attorney participation, volunteer turnout and client turnout. We added two new languages to the citizenship hotline, and three new languages to the WNA website. We hope to grow our partnership with credit unions, like Lower Valley Credit Union in the Yakima Valley, in order to expand access to both citizenship and economic integration. We're also looking forward to offering more Roving Clinics in rural areas.

Continuing to ensure that eligible legal permanent residents can become citizens is not only vital for immigrant families, but for the future of all of Washington's communities. Naturalization promotes economic growth and promotes civic health throughout the state. In addition, the work of the WNA program also reduces the demand for unregulated, exploitative *notarios* or unqualified, unlicensed immigration practitioners. These often fraudulent businesses cause enormous harm to clients, who lose thousands of dollars and can even lose their legal status, and to our community at-large, which is burdened with the cost of investigating and prosecuting *notarios*. The trusted service that Washington New Americans has provided for the last six years has educated Washington's immigrant communities and helps community members avoid exploitation. In June 2015, USCIS announced the launch of a public awareness campaign to encourage citizenship in the 10 states with the largest LPR populations. Washington is one of those states – and so we expect to see an even larger demand for high-quality, affordable legal services.

Achieving citizenship impacts wages, home-ownership rates, access to financial aid for education and participation in the formal financial system. Citizenship is a critical tool for asset-building in immigrant communities. For example, naturalized citizens are 1.93 times more likely to own a home than non-citizen immigrants,⁵ and poverty rates among naturalized citizens are six percentage points lower than legal permanent residents.⁶ Yet, our clients consistently tell us that the cost of naturalization is what has stopped them from applying. Unfortunately, those who can benefit most from naturalization's impact often are unable to access it. Approximately 62.4% of Washington New Americans clients are below 200% of the federal poverty line and 93.8% fall below 300% of the poverty line. The Washington New Americans programs helps low-income prospective citizens gain access to fee waivers (for households below 150% of the federal poverty line), free legal help and referrals to microloans to help overcome this

⁵ Callis, Bob & Melissa Kresin, "Moving to America, Moving to Homeownership," *U.S. Census Bureau*, (2003), Web.

⁶ Shierholz, Heidi. "The Effects of Citizenship on Family Income and Poverty." Economic Policy Institute Briefing Paper #256, February 24, 2010. Web.

barrier. In an effort to further address the barrier that the application poses to many low-income families, Washington New Americans has continued to teach financial literacy in conjunction with our civics education program. In fiscal year 2015, we provided basic financial literacy education to 387 immigrants.

As one of the few free resources available, our Citizenship Days and Roving Clinics are a critical resource for immigrant communities across the state. Moving forward into the 2016 fiscal year, we will ramp up funding for subcontractors in Central and Eastern Washington, add more ethnic media outlets to our outreach campaign, and keep improving the efficiency of Citizenship Days. We are also working with the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) to expand our Roving Clinics around the state to serve hard-to-reach populations and engage new attorneys in pro bono work and community service.

The State of Washington's commitment to making citizenship accessible is an investment in Washington's future growth. The Department of Commerce's continued support of this public-private partnership allows the WNA program to magnify our impact and attract private funding to support citizenship in Washington. As one client said in an exit survey at our Renton Citizenship Day, "The staff (volunteers, lawyers, and everyone involved) were really friendly, professional, and knowledgeable. I would absolutely recommend this program. You don't have to go through the naturalization process alone. This is a huge step I needed to take and you are making it possible."

On behalf of OneAmerica, our eight subcontractor organizations, and our network of community partners across the state, thank you for your continued funding and support for the Washington New Americans program.

APPENDIX A: SUBCONTRACTORS – GEOGRAPHIC REACH & COMMUNITIES SERVED

NORTHWEST WASHINGTON

Catholic Community Services Family Immigration Services

Geographic reach: Skagit, Whatcom, Snohomish, King, Pierce, Island and San Juan Counties

Communities served: Mostly Latino (Mexican, Central American and South American) and Russian-speaking in northern counties and Latino, East African, Asian Pacific Islander and Middle Eastern communities in King and Pierce counties

WESTERN WASHINGTON

Asian Counseling and Referral Service

Geographic reach: King County with an emphasis on Central Seattle, Downtown, the International District, South Seattle, Southeast Seattle, the Martin Luther King Jr. corridor, the Rainier Valley and South King County (Federal Way, Renton, Kent, SeaTac, Tukwila, Des Moines etc.)

Communities served: Asian Pacific Islanders, Latinos, and East Africans

Chinese Information Service Center

Geographic reach: King County

Communities served: Asian Pacific Islanders, especially Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean Communities and Latinos

Kitsap Immigrant Assistance Center

Geographic reach: Kitsap County

Communities served: Primarily Latino and Filipino

Lutheran Community Services Northwest

Geographic reach: Snohomish, King, Clark Counties

Communities served: All immigrant groups

Tacoma Community House

Geographic reach: South King County, Pierce, Kitsap and Thurston Counties

Communities served: Spanish speaking communities, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Ukrainian, Russian, Moldovan, Korean, Japanese, German, and Laotian

EASTERN WASHINGTON

Grupo CAFÉ (Center for the Advancement of Family Education)

Geographic reach: Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas Counties

Communities served: Primarily Latino and Filipino

La Casa Hogar

Geographic reach: Yakima, Benton, Franklin, Klickitat and Kittitas Counties

Communities served: Latino/Hispanic

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY STATISTICS

NATURALIZATION SERVICES

| | |
|---|-------|
| <u>Total Number of Clients Served</u> | 2,270 |
| <u>(unduplicated)</u> | |
| Clients Attending Citizenship Day Events: | 704 |
| Clients Served by Subcontractors: | 1,566 |
| <u>Total Number of N-400 Applications</u> | 867 |
| <u>Completed:</u> | |
| Completed at Citizenship Day: | 309 |
| Completed by Subcontractors: | 1,291 |

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Length of Time as a Lawful Permanent Resident (1,728 clients reporting):

- Over 20 years: 340 (19.7%)
- 10 to 19 years: 425 (24.6%)
- 0 to 9 years: 963 (55.7%)

Client Age (1,749 clients reporting):

- 65 & older: 266 (15.2%)

50 to 64 years: 436 (24.9%)
 30 to 49 years: 696 (39.8%)
 18 to 29 years: 351 (20.1%)

Interpreter Needed (2,270 clients reporting):

No: 1,778 (78.3%)
 Yes: 492 (21.7%)

Client Gender (1,753 clients reporting):

Male: 778 (44.4%)
 Female: 975 (55.6%)

Household Size (1,635 clients reporting):

Household size range: 1 to 12 people
 Average household size: 3 people

Client Annual Household Income (1,635 clients reporting): *Not weighted for household size*

Average Income of Clients: \$23,003.36
 Under 100% of the Poverty Guideline: 987 (60.4%)
 Under 200% of the Poverty Guideline: 1020 (62.4%)
 Under 300% of the Poverty Guideline: 1533 (93.8%)

Country of Origin (1,749 clients reporting):

89 countries represented

| | | |
|----------------------|------|----|
| Afghanistan | 0.5% | 8 |
| Albania | 0.0% | 0 |
| Algeria | 0.0% | 0 |
| American Samoa | 0.0% | 0 |
| Argentina | 0.1% | 2 |
| Armenia | 0.1% | 1 |
| Australia | 0.2% | 3 |
| Austria | 0.0% | 0 |
| Azerbaijan | 0.1% | 2 |
| Bahamas | 0.0% | 0 |
| Bahrain | 0.0% | 0 |
| Bangladesh | 0.1% | 1 |
| Belarus | 0.0% | 0 |
| Belgium | 0.0% | 0 |
| Belize | 0.1% | 1 |
| Benin | 0.0% | 0 |
| Bhutan | 1.7% | 29 |
| Bolivia | 0.0% | 0 |
| Bosnia & Herzegovina | 0.2% | 4 |

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------|-----|
| Brazil | 0.1% | 1 |
| Bulgaria | 0.1% | 1 |
| Burkina Faso | 0.0% | 0 |
| Burma | 0.1% | 1 |
| Burundi | 0.1% | 2 |
| Cambodia (Kampuchea) | 1.8% | 32 |
| Cameroon | 0.0% | 0 |
| Canada | 0.3% | 6 |
| Chile | 0.1% | 2 |
| China | 11.3% | 197 |
| Colombia | 1.0% | 18 |
| Costa Rica | 0.1% | 1 |
| Cote d'Ivoire | 0.0% | 0 |
| Croatia | 0.0% | 0 |
| Cuba | 0.1% | 2 |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | 0.2% | 3 |
| Dominican Republic | 0.1% | 1 |
| Ecuador | 0.1% | 2 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|------|----|
| Egypt | 0.2% | 3 |
| El Salvador | 1.2% | 21 |
| England | 0.0% | 0 |
| Eritrea | 0.4% | 7 |
| Estonia | 0.2% | 3 |
| Ethiopia | 0.9% | 16 |
| Fiji | 0.1% | 2 |
| Finland | 0.0% | 0 |
| France | 0.0% | 0 |
| The Gambia | 0.1% | 2 |
| Georgia | 0.2% | 4 |
| Germany | 0.3% | 5 |
| Ghana | 0.1% | 1 |
| Greece | 0.0% | 0 |
| Guatemala | 1.3% | 22 |
| Guernsey Channel Islands | 0.0% | 0 |
| Guinea | 0.1% | 1 |
| Haiti | 0.2% | 4 |
| Honduras | 0.2% | 3 |
| Hungary | 0.0% | 0 |
| Iceland | 0.0% | 0 |
| India | 0.5% | 8 |
| Indonesia | 0.2% | 4 |
| Iran | 0.2% | 4 |
| Iraq | 2.9% | 51 |
| Ireland | 0.0% | 0 |
| Israel | 0.1% | 2 |
| Jamaica | 0.1% | 1 |
| Japan | 0.1% | 2 |
| Jordan | 0.1% | 1 |
| Kazakstan | 0.9% | 15 |
| Kenya | 0.6% | 10 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 0.5% | 8 |
| Laos | 0.4% | 7 |
| Latvia | 0.0% | 0 |
| Lebanon | 0.0% | 0 |
| Liberia | 0.1% | 2 |
| Lithuania | 0.1% | 2 |
| Malaysia | 0.1% | 1 |
| Marshall Islands | 0.0% | 0 |
| Mauritania | 0.0% | 0 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------|-----|
| Mexico | 37.1% | 649 |
| Moldova | 2.8% | 49 |
| Mongolia | 0.0% | 0 |
| Morocco | 0.2% | 4 |
| Myanmar (Burma) | 0.1% | 1 |
| Nepal | 0.0% | 0 |
| Netherlands (Holland) | 0.0% | 0 |
| New Zealand | 0.1% | 1 |
| Nicaragua | 0.1% | 1 |
| Nigeria | 0.1% | 1 |
| Oman | 0.0% | 0 |
| Pakistan | 0.2% | 3 |
| Palau, Republic of | 0.0% | 0 |
| Panama | 0.1% | 1 |
| Paraguay | 0.0% | 0 |
| Peru | 0.5% | 8 |
| Philippines | 4.2% | 73 |
| Poland | 0.0% | 0 |
| Portugal | 0.0% | 0 |
| Puerto Rico | 0.0% | 0 |
| Qatar | 0.0% | 0 |
| Romania | 0.3% | 5 |
| Russia | 2.9% | 50 |
| Rwanda | 0.0% | 0 |
| Samoa | 0.7% | 13 |
| Samoa, American | 0.1% | 2 |
| Senegal | 0.1% | 1 |
| Sierra Leone | 0.0% | 0 |
| Singapore | 0.0% | 0 |
| Slovakia | 0.0% | 0 |
| Slovenia | 0.0% | 0 |
| Somalia | 1.3% | 23 |
| Solomon Islands | 0.0% | 0 |
| South Africa | 0.1% | 1 |
| South Korea | 0.8% | 14 |
| South Sudan | 0.1% | 1 |
| Spain | 0.0% | 0 |
| Sri Lanka | 0.0% | 0 |
| Sudan | 0.1% | 2 |
| Sweden | 0.0% | 0 |
| Switzerland | 0.0% | 0 |

| | | |
|---------------------|------|-----|
| Syria | 0.1% | 1 |
| Taiwan | 1.1% | 19 |
| Tajikistan | 0.1% | 1 |
| Tanzania | 0.2% | 3 |
| Thailand | 0.3% | 5 |
| Togo | 0.1% | 1 |
| Tonga | 0.1% | 1 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 0.1% | 1 |
| Tunisia | 0.0% | 0 |
| Turkey | 0.0% | 0 |
| Turkmenistan | 0.1% | 1 |
| Uganda | 0.0% | 0 |
| Ukraine | 7.4% | 130 |

| | | |
|--|------|-----|
| Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) | 0.1% | 1 |
| United Arab Emirates | 0.0% | 0 |
| United Kingdom | 0.1% | 2 |
| Uruguay | 0.0% | 0 |
| Uzbekistan | 0.4% | 7 |
| Venezuela | 0.3% | 6 |
| Vietnam | 7.5% | 131 |
| Virgin Islands, British | 0.0% | 0 |
| Wales | 0.0% | 0 |
| Western Samoa | 0.0% | 0 |
| Yemen | 0.2% | 4 |
| Zambia | 0.0% | 0 |

Primary Languages (1,792 clients reporting):
46 language backgrounds represented

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|-----|
| Afrikaans | 0.0% | 0 |
| Albanian | 0.0% | 0 |
| Amharic | 0.7% | 13 |
| Arabic | 3.5% | 62 |
| Armenian | 0.0% | 0 |
| Bangla | 0.1% | 1 |
| Basque | 0.0% | 0 |
| Belarusian | 0.0% | 0 |
| Bosnian | 0.2% | 4 |
| Bulgarian | 0.1% | 1 |
| Burmese | 0.1% | 2 |
| Cambodian | 0.4% | 7 |
| Cantonese | 0.7% | 12 |
| Chinese (Unspecified Dialect) | 10.9% | 195 |
| Czech | 0.0% | 0 |
| Dari | 0.1% | 1 |
| Dinka | 0.1% | 1 |
| Dutch | 0.0% | 0 |
| English | 5.4% | 96 |
| Farsi | 0.2% | 4 |
| Finnish | 0.0% | 0 |
| French | 0.3% | 6 |
| German | 0.1% | 2 |
| Greek | 0.0% | 0 |
| Gujarati | 0.0% | 0 |
| Hindi | 0.1% | 2 |

| | | |
|-------------|------|----|
| Hmong | 0.0% | 0 |
| Icelandic | 0.0% | 0 |
| Igbo | 0.0% | 0 |
| Ilokano | 0.1% | 1 |
| Ilongo | 0.0% | 0 |
| Indonesian | 0.2% | 3 |
| Japanese | 0.1% | 2 |
| Kazakh | 0.1% | 1 |
| Khmer | 1.3% | 24 |
| Kikuyu | 0.3% | 5 |
| Kirundi | 0.2% | 4 |
| Korean | 0.8% | 14 |
| Kurdish | 0.0% | 0 |
| Kyrgyz | 0.0% | 0 |
| Lao | 0.4% | 7 |
| Lingala | 0.1% | 1 |
| Mandarin | 1.0% | 18 |
| Mandingo | 0.1% | 1 |
| Marshallese | 0.0% | 0 |
| Mien | 0.0% | 0 |
| Mixtec | 0.1% | 1 |
| Moldovian | 0.8% | 15 |
| Mongolian | 0.0% | 0 |
| Nepali | 1.6% | 29 |
| Nuur | 0.1% | 2 |
| Oromo | 0.0% | 0 |
| Pashto | 0.3% | 6 |

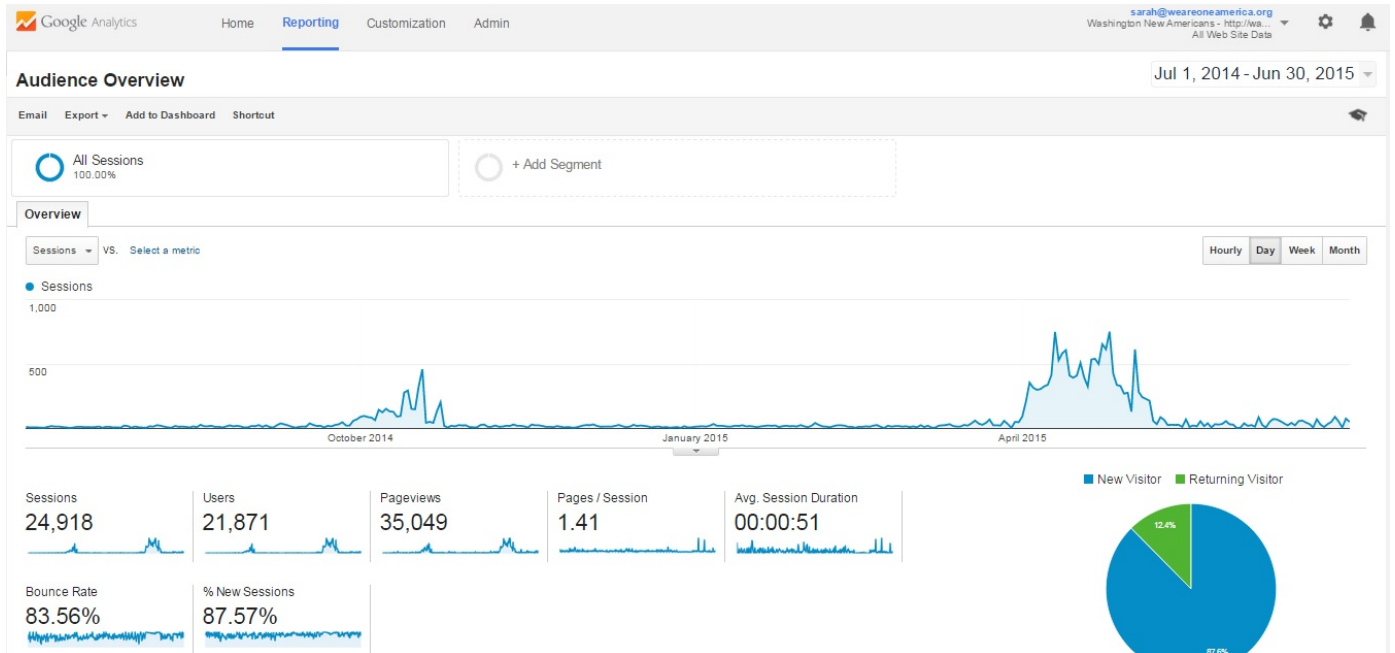
| | | |
|-----------------------|-------|-----|
| Persian | 0.1% | 1 |
| Polish | 0.0% | 0 |
| Polynesian | 0.1% | 1 |
| Portuguese | 0.1% | 1 |
| Punjabi | 0.2% | 4 |
| Quechua | 0.0% | 0 |
| Romanian | 0.5% | 9 |
| Russian | 10.5% | 188 |
| Russian Sign Language | 0.0% | 0 |
| Saho | 0.1% | 1 |
| Samoan | 0.8% | 14 |
| Serbian | 0.0% | 0 |
| Serbo-Croatian | 0.0% | 0 |
| Slovak | 0.0% | 0 |
| Somali | 1.4% | 25 |
| Spanish | 39.0% | 699 |
| Sudanese | 0.0% | 0 |
| Swahili | 0.3% | 5 |
| Swedish | 0.0% | 0 |

| | | |
|---------------|------|-----|
| Tagalog | 3.4% | 61 |
| Tamil | 0.0% | 0 |
| Thai | 0.2% | 4 |
| Tibetan | 0.0% | 0 |
| Tigre | 0.0% | 0 |
| Tigrinya | 0.3% | 6 |
| Tongan | 0.0% | 0 |
| Turkish | 0.2% | 4 |
| Ukrainian | 3.3% | 59 |
| Urdu | 0.2% | 3 |
| Uzbek | 0.0% | 0 |
| Vietnamese | 7.1% | 128 |
| Visayan | 0.2% | 3 |
| Wolof | 0.0% | 0 |
| Xhosa | 0.0% | 0 |
| Yoruba | 0.0% | 0 |
| Zigua | 0.0% | 0 |
| Multilingual* | 1.8% | 33 |

APPENDIX C: WEBSITE ANALYTICS

Web Sessions and Page Views

Range: July 1, 2014 – June 30 2015



APPENDIX D: EXAMPLES OF PRESS COVERAGE

RADIO

1480 AM ESPN Radio Deportes (Tacoma, on-air announcement on October 10)

KSVR 91.7FM Skagit Valley Community Radio (Mt. Vernon April 11 & 18
Interview with OA Staff Member Javier Cruz about April 25 Citizenship Day

Russian Radio 7 (Portland/Vancouver, week of April 20)

Interview with Subcontractor LCSNW Staff Member Ruslan Revutsky about April 25
Citizenship Day

TELEVISION

KEPR CBS News (Pasco, Tri-Cities)
10/18/2014

Video & article including interview with Washington New Americans Program Manager Lilly Hankins and client in Pasco

Citizenship Day

By Kathleen Jacob | Published: Oct 18, 2014 at 5:40 PM PST



[Link to Video](#)

PASCO, Wash. --Across the state, between 180 and 200,000 people are eligible to apply for citizenship, but only about ten percent of those people become citizens each year.

Washington New Americans held a free legal clinic in honor of Citizenship day to help eligible legal permanent residents through the process.

People of all ages gathered to get good advice and hands on assistance with their citizenship applications.

"It's a really complicated process and if people don't get good legal advice , it can be kind of a risky process for them too, so a lot of people will just hesitate to even apply," said Washington New Americans' Lilly Hankins.

Washington New Americans puts on big events like this twice a year. They bring in immigration attorneys to provide free legal advice to people who need it.

"It's great, it's another step you've gotta take in this process. It's a good way to get involved with the community and be able to vote."

Fernando Carranca has lived in the US with his family for 22 years. Becoming a citizen has been a long drawn out process for him. Attorney fees and language barriers have made things hard.

"It's just how immigration works unfortunately," said Fernando.

When we asked him how he felt about the promised changes immigration reform would bring...

"Honestly kind of angry because they don't think about the people they're hurting by not doing their job the right way. I mean it's always about what does the right or the left wing think, and it's not about that, what about the people?"

So helping the people is exactly what Washington New Americans sets out to do.

"One of my favorite things is when I get calls from people who we've helped become citizens and now they're getting their first ballot in the mail to vote and they call and are like 'I'm filling out my ballot, I'm really excited,'" said Lilly.

Fernando says that is he becomes a citizen in time he will be voting November 4th.

To get in touch with Washington New Americans call 1-877-926-3924.

KNDO/KDNU NBC News (Pasco, Tri-Cities)

10/18/2014

Video & article including interview with AILA-WA attorney volunteer Shannon Underwood

Attorneys Boost Citizenship Process

Posted by Raven Richard, Reporter



Citizenship Day helped local residents complete their citizenship process and applications.

PASCO, WA- Washington New Americans put on Citizenship Day at Columbia Basin College Saturday.

Eight attorneys volunteered to view people's applications for filing and processing for citizenship.

They expected to get nearly 50 people processed, and those they could not get to, were put on the waiting list.

One attorney explained how important it is to have clinics like this with specialists that can help, especially when false lawyers are trying to take advantage of people.

"I know what the need is in the community, all over Washington. It's very important that people can see attorneys and have the ability to get expertise that they wouldn't otherwise go in for or

pay for. Becoming a citizen is such a huge benefit and it's really important that we're able to help people outside of the normal days of our practices," said Attorney Shannon Underwood.

Underwood also said not getting proper help could actually reverse the progress and may even cause some people to get deported.

The clinic happens several times a year and the main focus is to help those that are just a step away from citizenship especially now, with growing concerns for our immigration system.

KNDO/KDNU NBC News (Pasco, Tri-Cities)

4/25/2015

Video & article including interview with AILA-WA attorney volunteer Jon Shaklee

Hundreds of Yakima Residents Apply for Citizenship

Posted: Apr 26, 2015 12:20 PM PST Updated: Apr 26, 2015 12:20 PM PST

Posted by Veronica Quintero, Reporter



YAKIMA- Applying for citizenship can be a confusing process.

Which is why "One America" is partnering with several other organizations to hold 4 events on "Citizenship Day" (April 25th) across the state, including 1 in Yakima.

These events include a free legal clinic where people can get help filling out their applications.

"Like anything else with immigration, there's a lot of fear of the unknown. People don't know, how they qualify to become a citizen, they don't know how long will it take," said Immigration Lawyer, Jon Shaklee. "I've talked to several people today who have been eligible to apply for citizenship for several years, they just haven't done it because they were afraid."

The organizers say they plan on holding more free legal clinics in Yakima because they see a big demand for these services. Over 50 people were turned away yesterday after they reached full capacity but the organizers pre-scheduled appointments for them.

PRINT

COLUMBIA BASIN HERALD

10/21/2014

Article including interview with OneAmerica staff member Ellicott Dandy

Citizenship Day puts naturalization in reach



Tiffany Sukola/Columbia Basin Herald

Volunteers with Washington New Americans check people in during Citizenship Day at Big Bend Community College Saturday.

MOSES LAKE - Hundreds of legal permanent residents living in the Basin are a little closer to citizenship thanks to the Washington New Americans' Citizenship Day event.

A group of volunteer immigration attorneys, paralegals and interpreters were in Moses Lake Saturday to help permanent residents ("green card" holders) navigate the U.S. citizenship process. They provided services such as citizenship application assistance and legal review of applications and gave general information about the naturalization process.

Citizenship Day was created in Washington in 2004 by the state chapter of the American Lawyers Association and has been replicated in more than 30 states. The association partners with Washington New Americans to host the event in state at no cost to participants.

Washington New Americans is a joint effort between OneAmerica, a non-profit dedicated to advancing justice and equality, and the State of Washington. Their goal is to connect eligible legal permanent residents to the information and services they need to successfully pursue citizenship.

The Moses Lake workshop was one of four in the state this year. Citizenship Day also took place simultaneously in Renton, Pasco and Olympia. Workshops have also been held in virtually all parts of the state over the years, including Spokane, Yakima, Wenatchee, Tacoma, Bellingham and Walla Walla.

Washington New Americans volunteer Ellicott Dandy said they serve anywhere from 400 to 500 people at each event each year.

According to the organization, there are an estimated 180,000 "green card" holders in Washington eligible to become citizens, but haven't done so due to various barriers.

Dandy said that fact is why Washington New Americans believes it is so vital to host Citizenship Day workshops.

"Citizenship is so important, it gives you the opportunity to vote, to bring your family over and makes you eligible for government jobs and other benefits," she said. "Citizenship also just solidifies a status that many permanent residents already feel."

Dandy said many legal residents find the citizenship process intimidating.

"It's difficult, especially if English is someone's second language," she said. "It can also be very expensive, the application fee alone is more than \$600 and attorneys can cost almost \$1,400."

Dandy said Citizenship Day events allow residents access to attorneys and paralegals who can help them fill out their applications. They can also determine if an applicant is eligible for a fee-waiver, she said.

"We get them ready to basically send their applications in the mail and give them the resources to study for the test," said Dandy.

She said she's seen firsthand how valuable the workshops are to some people.

"People are grateful, there are some who say they would not have become a citizen without our help," said Dandy. "To be able to give someone access to more rights and more stability through citizenship is amazing."

TRI-CITY HERALD

10/17/2014

Group holds Citizenship Day in Pasco to help Green Card holders

Kristin M. Kraemer, Tri-City Herald

An immigration advocacy group is holding its semi-annual Citizenship Day today, Oct. 18, to help legal permanent residents wade through naturalization paperwork.

The group is offering a free legal clinic from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Columbia Basin College's Center for Career and Technical Education in Pasco.

The event, one of four organized throughout the state, is expected to draw a long line of people interested in fulfilling their dream of becoming a United States citizen.

"A big barrier to citizenship is the (Form N-400). A lot of people who particularly don't speak English as a first language find it daunting to fill out," said Pavan Vangipuram, spokesman for the Seattle-based nonprofit OneAmerica.

People who attend the workshop will get paired with a pro bono attorney to first determine if they're eligible for citizenship and, if so, get individualized help with the documents.

Legal permanent resident is the legal term for a Green Card holder. There is a long list of qualifications to advance in the process, like living in the U.S. for five years and having good moral character.

Vangipuram said Washington has more than 180,000 legal permanent residents who are eligible for naturalization, but for whatever reason haven't taken the final step. A common barrier is the application fee is about \$700, though some people are eligible for a fee waiver, he said.

"You are not deportable if you are a U.S. citizen. You can enter and leave the country freely without any kind of visa worries or bureaucratic error that could prevent you from returning," he told the Herald. "And you can sponsor family members. A lot of families are split up because of immigration issues."

New citizens also can vote.

Citizenship Day is a positive, life-changing opportunity for immigrants at a time when Congress and President Obama aren't making progress on the broken immigration system, Vangipuram said.

Vangipuram said the clinic at 2600 N. 20th Ave. will have nine attorneys, 15 paralegals, eight interpreters and eight general volunteers. Languages spoken at the workshop will include English Spanish, Turkish, Italian, Romanian, French, Tamil and German.

There also will be a representative fluent in American Sign Language.

The organization selected the languages based on its research in the community and availability, Vangipuram said.

The Washington New Americans program is in partnership with the Washington chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

The group encourages people who don't know their status to attend. Even if they're not eligible right now, they can get educated on what it takes and may qualify for the event next April or in one year, Vangipuram said.

The clinic will accept people until 3 p.m., but Vangipuram said it's better if they get there earlier just in case paperwork takes an extra long time.

-- Kristin M. Kraemer: 509-582-1531; kkraemer@tricityherald.com; Twitter: @KristinMKraemer

HUFFINGTON POST

10/30/2014

Article written by volunteer Aaron Strumwasser in Moses Lake

Citizenship Day

Citizenship Day is full of long, sometimes awkward checkpoints, but an undeniably awkward moment has to be the last one. After a legal permanent resident has received help from various legal professionals, I, a volunteer, ask her to write on a small whiteboard her reason for applying for citizenship. And then I take a picture as if she, holding the small whiteboard in front of her, were having her mug shot taken. The criminal imagery isn't entirely inappropriate, since many of the other awkward moments involved applicants getting asked about their criminal records. A candid applicant saves time and money, a \$680 fee, but she may also find out that certain minor crimes will stand in her way and even get her deported. But by and large the applicants I encountered on October 18 at Big Bend Community College (in Washington State) had nothing to be ashamed of. It was I who was ashamed, because when the day began I knew so little about the process of becoming a citizen, and I knew so little about the motivations of the people who were applying for it.

I would've been happy to ask applicants for their motivations without my taking a picture of anybody holding a whiteboard. But very few applicants spoke English, so there was some practical value in taking a picture and then having the message translated by a colleague. One of the few applicants who spoke English fluently, a Chinese-American woman who has lived in the US for 44 years and who has an American husband and daughter, had understandably mixed feelings about becoming a citizen. To make things official at this point, she pointed out, is to call into question the authenticity of her American identity as it has existed until now.

Latino applicants, who comprised 95 percent of the applicants, had more at stake. Most of them were in middle or old age, and most of them wrote something on the whiteboard about the right to vote. Nobody mentioned any particular political issue when I asked for one. It was the right -- or, as one man humbly put it, the privilege -- that was important. The lack of any single urgent political cause was ultimately heartening. Citizenship in these people's eyes changes personal identity at the deepest level. And it has its practical perks. What citizenship actually

gets you, in addition to the right to vote, is the right to bring family members into the country, and it gets you the right to freely leave the country and reenter it. A legal permanent resident has, at best, a hard time reentering.

A legal permanent resident -- that is, someone with a green card -- has to wait five years before she can apply for citizenship. The paperwork involved in the application is extensive, as the attorneys, paralegals and interpreters at Citizenship Day will tell you. And the application is rather invasive. Pointed questions about marital history and encounters with violence sit side-by-side in the 21-page document, and one's failure to account for so much as an unpaid speeding ticket could trigger suspicion from USCIS, which has been housed under the Department of Homeland Security since 9/11. The final hoop is the naturalization test. There are one hundred possible questions and an applicant gets asked ten of them, seven of which have to be answered correctly. The knowledgeable, energetic and bilingual staff at the Seattle-based immigrant rights organization OneAmerica, which runs Citizenship Day in

partnership with Washington State, does a great deal for applicants, but the staff doesn't have to teach them political values. US-born citizens like me are used to thinking of immigrants as hungry for the opportunity to make the bottom line. In light of events like Citizenship Day I think we've overlooked our immigrants' idealism. Their self-interest is inseparable from, as one applicant put it on the whiteboard, the desire "to be accounted for."
